

Marchetti
Victor
Org Sciendology
(Church of)

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APPEAL

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Ex-agent makes charge

Former CIA official Victor Marchetti has charged the CIA, FBI and other government intelligence agencies with domestic interference in the affairs of a church. Marchetti has accused the agencies of violating the First Amendment rights of the Church of Scientology by subjecting it to "sloppy and inaccurate investigation and analysis" and by making false reports about the religious group.

Allegations of damaging and improper intelligence activities against the church were also made by military intelligence expert Maj. James Walton (Ret) and by noted Pentagon official A. Ernest Fitzgerald. The charges were leveled after each man examined several thousand pages of intelligence documents acquired by the church through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Marchetti, a CIA official from 1955 until 1969, and author of the controversial best seller "The CIA And The Cult Of Intelligence", said in a letter to the church distributed to the media that after reviewing the documents he felt both "professional disgust" and "shame that the government would so harrass a religious movement and its members". Marchetti attributed the harrassment and false reports to "government paranoia, not unlike that which was heaped upon other different religious movements in the past".

Fitzgerald, who drew national attention in 1968-1969 when he exposed the Air Force's two billion dollar cost overrun on the controversial C-5 military transport, labelled the government reports "garbage, damaging garbage - unrefuted,

because they don't give you a chance to see your file". Fitzgerald said the reports were

typical of other intelligence activities that he had observed. "It's supposed to be factual", he said, "but it's really anything they can find - true, false, whatever - it's all just swept up into a file. I also found many things are just fabricated".

The Church of Scientology received national attention when it was found to be one of 99 groups of a Nixon Administration "enemies list" maintained by the Internal Revenue Service. Since that time the church has publicly charged numerous other federal agencies, including the FBI and CIA, with having maliciously and illegally violated its civil rights through "dirty tricks and the dissemination of false and fabricated information."